

# Reward and Recognition FAQs - for residents

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## 1. Reward and Recognition

### 1.1 What is reward and recognition?

Reward and recognition (R&R) is the appreciation that we show towards residents and carers who work with us in co-production to shape our Newham Council services. It can come in many forms, from thanks and appreciation, professional development opportunities, training, refreshments in meetings or R&R payments. R&R is an important way of demonstrating valuing your contribution, acknowledge your input, and celebrate the achievements made when we work together.

### 1.2 How do I submit my R&R claim form?

You can submit your claim form to:

- Your **Lead Officer** – the Newham officer that you have been working with
- The **Co-Production Team email** – [productionteam@newham.gov.uk](mailto:productionteam@newham.gov.uk) CO-
- The **Co-Production Team WhatsApp** via Latifat Honey Sarfo (07970 199 670) or Sophie Ibotson (07970 406 126)

### 1.3 Can I include multiple activities on one claim form?

Yes, you can include multiple activities, across different projects on one claim form. However, you will need to include the Lead Officer details for each activity, so that the Co-Production Team can seek approval before processing.

If the claim does not contain the correct details or incomplete details, it may lead to a delay in the claim being processed.

## 2. Payments

### 2.1 Can I have my R&R paid to a third party e.g. a friend, family member or as a donation to a charity?

No, you must be the recipient of the payment. However, you are welcome to transfer the money to a friend or family or a charity of your choice if you choose to do so.

### 2.2 Can I update my payment details?

Yes. If you have claimed before but wish to update your bank details, you will need to fill in your new details on your claim form and notify us that you wish to update them.

You should also let us know if you've moved house as well.

### 2.3 Can I be paid by shopping voucher?

We are currently using the Prezzy voucher system.

These can be sent to you by email, and then you can access the voucher online or using the app.

If you are unable to use the online vouchers (e.g. you don't have an email, technology or really struggle with digital platforms), then we can print and send you the voucher.

### 2.4 Can I claim my expenses by shopping voucher?

No, you will have to claim your expenses (e.g. travel, carer costs) by bank transfer.

## 3. Timings

### 3.1 How long do I have to claim R&R?

All claims should be submitted within a month of the activity taking place. If your claim is submitted over three months of the activity, then it may be refused. The responsibility to claim is yours.

If this won't be possible or you need support to fill out the form, then please speak to a member of the Co-production Team.

### 3.2 How long will it take to receive my R&R payment?

Once you have submitted the claim to the Co-Production Team, the payment will normally be made within 21 days but in some cases, this may be up to 28 days. There may be delays if there are missing details, incorrect information or clarification is required.

## 4. Expenses

### 4.1 Can I claim travel expenses?

This depends on the project. You will need to speak to the lead officer in advance of incurring the expense and agree what can be reimbursed.

There is a travel section on the claim for, which a resident can fill in to claim:

- Private vehicle (and parking costs)
- Bus
- Underground / Overground / DLR
- Bicycle
- Taxi - receipt required

Please let the Lead Officer or Co-Production Team know if you need the expense and the payment separated (see 5.5)

### 4.2 Can I claim carer costs?

This depends on the project. You will need to speak to the lead officer in advance of incurring the expense and agree what can be reimbursed.

This will depend on whether you need to purchase additional care hours to participate.

You will need to provide the following:

- Hourly rate
- Name of carer
- Hours claimed
- Total

The reimbursed payment will be made to you and then you will be responsible for paying your carer their costs.

Please let the Lead Officer or Co-Production Team know if you need the expense and the payment separated (see 5.5)

### 4.3 Can I claim childcare costs?

This depends on the project. You will need to speak to the lead officer in advance of incurring the expense and agree what can be reimbursed.

You will need to provide the follow:

- Hourly rate
- Name of child carer
- Hours claimed
- Total

The reimbursed payment will be made to you and then you will be responsible for paying your carer their costs.

Childcare over 2 hours will need to be provided by an Ofstead approved childcare provider. Care under 2 hours can be provided by a trusted family or friend.

Please let the Lead Officer or Co-Production Team know if you need the expense and the payment separated (see 5.5)

#### **4.4 Can I claim other expenses?**

This depends on the project. You will need to speak to the lead officer in advance of incurring the expense and agree what can be reimbursed. Once agreed, this can be added to the claim form.

### **5. Impacts of claiming**

#### **5.1 Will claiming R&R have an impact on my benefits?**

Reward and recognition may have an impact on your benefits, such as the impact on your eligibility or reduce the amount you receive. This covers all payments, whether one-off or more frequent.

The limits on payments that can be received without benefits being affected vary widely, can differ for each person, and can change from year to year. It is essential that you check the impact of your reward and recognition on your individual circumstances before they start.

You can contact Our Newham Money on 020 8430 2041, which is open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

#### **5.2 If I have a payment limit, due to my benefits, can I ask to be paid less?**

Yes. You can ask for a financial reward payment at a lower amount than your benefit limit or you can decline a payment.

#### **5.3 Will claiming R&R have an impact on my taxes?**

When payment is provided above what can be counted as expenses, it becomes liable for tax and national insurance.

[HMRC](#) can advise you about your tax situation and [TaxAid](#) have a helpline and lots of information on their website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>

<https://taxaid.org.uk>

#### **5.4 Do shopping vouchers impact my benefits or tax?**

Generally, the use of vouchers does not negate tax or benefit implications as they are treated as earnings and they need to be declared in the same way as cash or bank transfers.

### **5.5 Will the reimbursement of expenses affect my benefits?**

The reimbursement of expenses to residents does not affect either your tax status or your entitlement to benefits as expenses are not seen as earnings. Reimbursed expenses must exactly match the payment or it will be classed as earnings

You can also have your expense reimbursement and your financial reward paid separately. If expenses and a financial reward are grouped together in a single 'thank you' payment, the whole payment will be classed as earnings.

For example, a 'thank you' payment of £25 that also covers any travel costs will be seen as £25 of earnings and this may affect your benefits entitlements.

### **5.6 If you are in receipt of benefits, and you decline the R&R payment, will I need to log my time as volunteering?**

If reimbursement of expenses is the only financial payment received, your contribution is considered volunteering. You can volunteer if you are in receipt of benefits, but you will need to Contact Jobcentre Plus to tell them that they are doing it before you start.

If you are receiving Universal Credit, then your volunteering can count for to up to half the time you agree to spend looking for and preparing for work in your 'Claimant Commitment'. If your benefits are received for health reasons or a disability, then voluntary engagement activities will not trigger a Work Capability Assessment, and you will not need to provide evidence from their doctor about your volunteering.

See more information here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits>